



The University of Edinburgh

Embedding Partnership in Learning and Teaching

Students as Co-Creators Seminar Series
University of Westminster, Spring 2021

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Outline for this session

- Existing definitions of curriculum co-creation and partnerships in learning and teaching
- Research into conceptualisations of curriculum co-creation
- Discussion of embedding partnership in different types of curriculum co-creation
- Reflections from Dr Romy Begum (Senior Lecturer, Nutrition & Exercise Science) and Nishat Tasim (Biomedical Sciences student and Students as Co-Creators Ambassador) from the University of Westminster
- Questions and further discussion

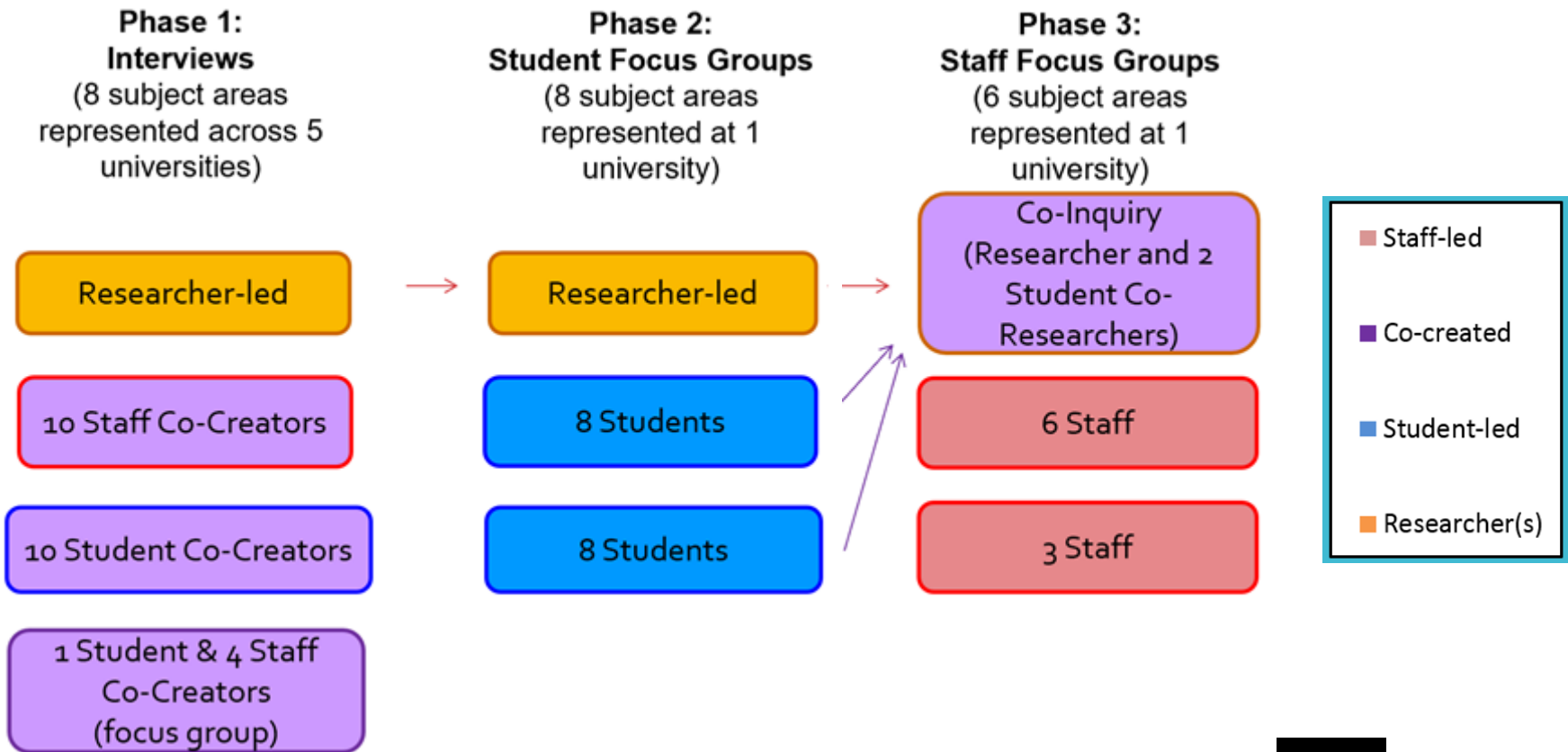


Existing Definitions of Curriculum Co-Creation and Partnerships in Learning and Teaching

- ‘Co-creation of curricula implies students and academic staff working in partnership to create some or all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the learning experience’
 - Bovill et al. (2011, p. 137)
- ‘We define student-faculty partnership as a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision making, implementation, investigation, or analysis.’
 - Cook-Sather et al. (2014, pp. 6-7)



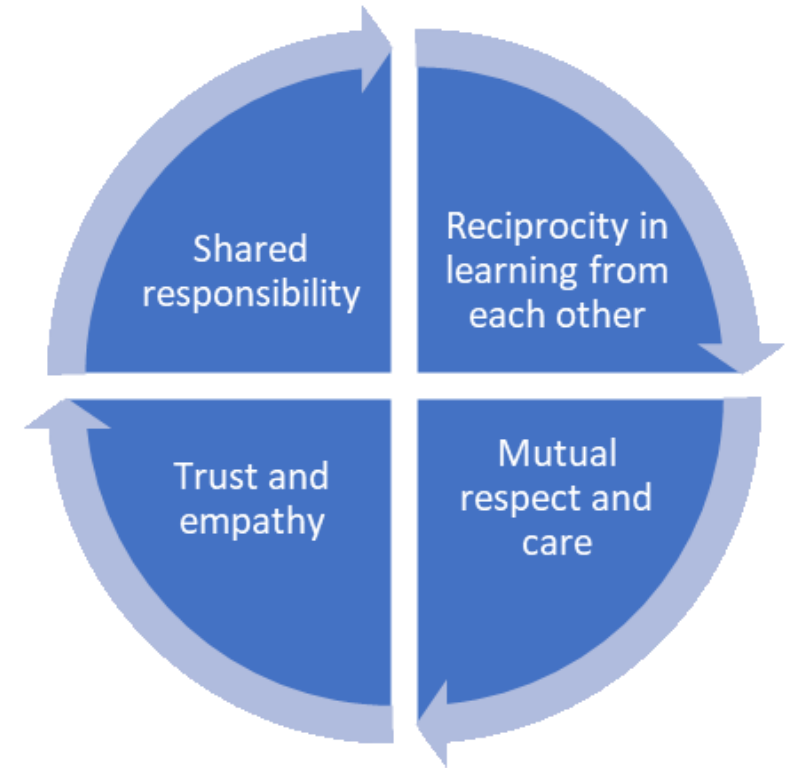
Research: Curriculum Co-Creation Across 8 Subject Areas at 5 Universities





Values-Based Implementation: Ethos

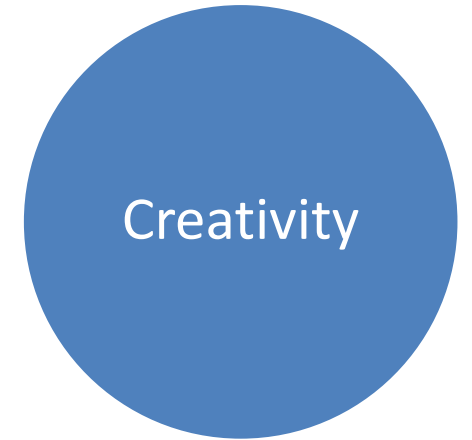
- Giving students **agency**:
 - ‘It was about how everybody would come w some skills or some knowledge and **it would towards one goal**. ...I think it’s where you kn **you can learn from each other** and **you can forward in creating something good for bot you, more than just your own individual us** (Student 11)
- Practical examples:
 - Demonstrating care and compassion
 - Ice-breaker discussion boards
 - Spaces for sharing relevant news articles, websites, etc. that relate to course content via discussion board/ Padlet/ Twitter hashtag





Creativity

- Openness to diverse perspectives and recognition of different types of expertise
 - ‘[We were] creating learning materials, creating learning experiences. This idea of the whole being more than the sum of its parts’ (Staff 7)
 - ‘It gave them [students] that insight into what it is like from the other side... [Similarly, for staff] it is learning something that you couldn’t have gained without students’ insight.’ (Staff 10)
- Practical examples:
 - Re-designing projects or assessments creatively with students, within parameters
 - Collaboration via new online tools – Padlet, Google Jamboard
 - Creative assessments: projects, blogs, videos





Ongoing Process of Negotiation

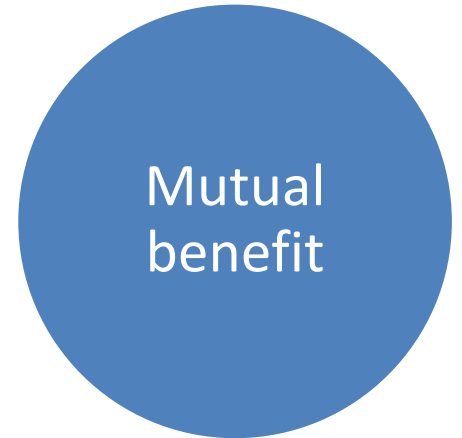
- Clear two-way communication and feedback to have the greatest potential to benefit all
 - ‘It does get rid of the “them and us” barrier a bit...’ (Student 4)
- Being clear about expectations and what can and cannot be up for negotiation
- Practical examples:
 - Respect for all ideas
 - Empathy when learning about student lived experiences
 - Promoting reciprocity so everyone is contributing and benefitting





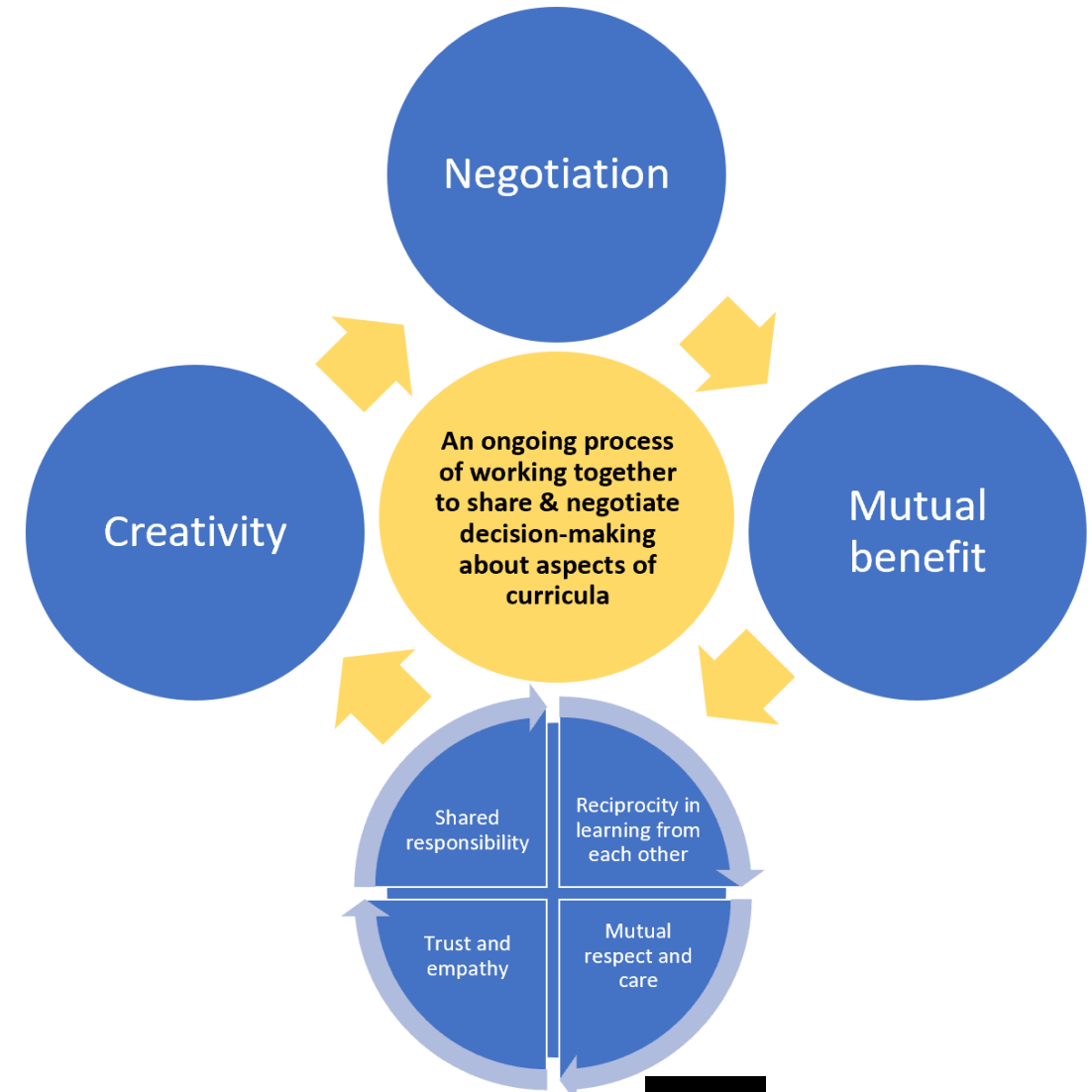
Mutually-Beneficial Process

- Student *and* staff development
 - ‘It genuinely was one of the best courses I’ve done in the university because you can genuinely feel like you’re making a difference.’ (Student 8)
 - ‘There is a fantastic synergy and collaboration with the students... and that’s very rewarding for staff – striking up some really intimate academic relationships.’ (Staff 4)
- Practical examples:
 - Communication skills
 - Teamwork and collaboration skills
 - Course enhancement
 - Sharing responsibility and shaping projects that can benefit other students, staff, and the wider community

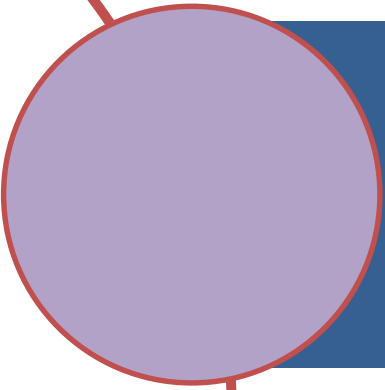


New Curriculum Co-Creation Definition

- The **values-based implementation** of staff and students working together in an **ongoing, reciprocal, creative, and mutually beneficial process** to negotiate and share decision-making regarding aspects of higher education curricula (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2020)

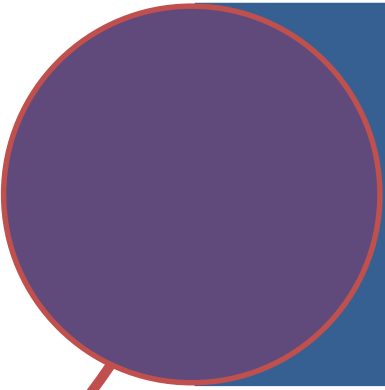


Two Main Types of Partnerships in Curriculum Co-Creation



Co-creation ‘in the curriculum’ (Bovill and Woolmer, (2019):
current students on the course working with staff **during** a course
(often whole-class co-creation, earning course credit)

Examples: consensus on content, pedagogy, assessment, grading criteria



Co-creation ‘of the curriculum’ (Bovill and Woolmer, (2019):
students and staff co-creating parts of the curriculum **before or after** a course (often selected students, receiving professional development and/or payment)

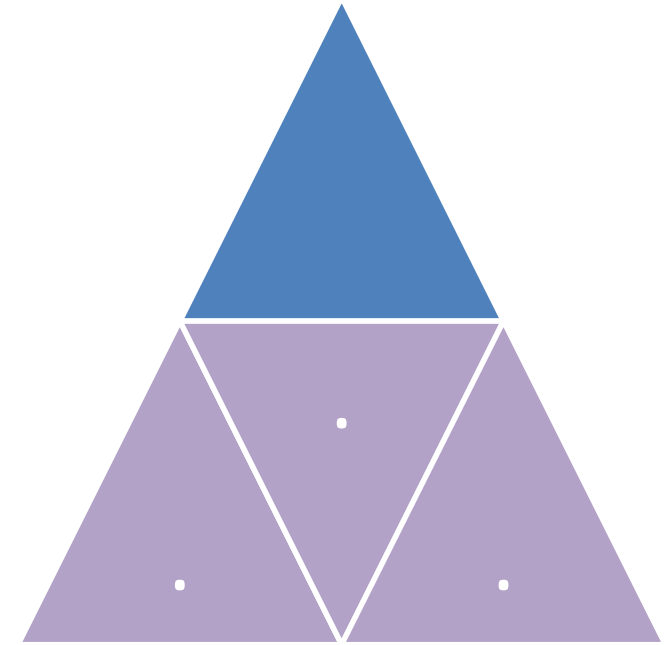
Examples: educational resources, collaborative research





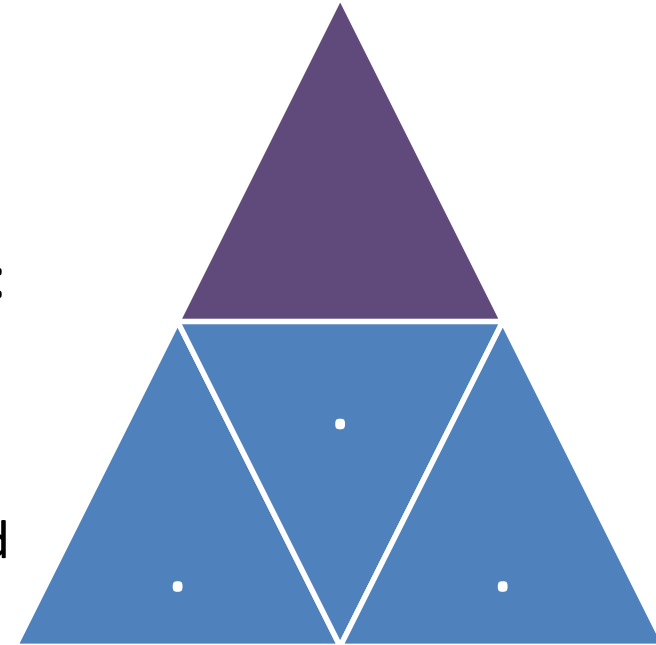
Embedding partnership: Co-creation *in* the curriculum

- Partnership often takes place within classrooms (in person & online) through:
 - a bottom-up approach
- To be successful
 - staff often take the lead in creating opportunities for students to engage
 - strong working relationships between students and staff
 - empowered staff and students need courage (acknowledging vulnerabilities) and institutional support to engage in new ways of working (e.g., structures, processes, workloads)



Embedding partnership: Co-creation *of* the curriculum

- Partnership often takes place via department-wide or institution-wide collaborative initiatives through:
 - top-down approaches
- To be successful
 - universities and students' associations often take the lead in creating opportunities for students and staff to engage in curriculum co-creation
 - strong working relationships between students and staff
 - empowered staff and students need institutional support (funding, dedicated staff providing coordination and guidance)



Implications for embedding partnerships in curriculum co-creation

- Focusing not only on practices but also principles, values, and processes to create an ethos of partnership-working
- Many benefits! Relationships, skills, outcomes
- Often transformative experiences for students and staff, but the need to be mindful of who is selected/self-selecting
- Moving away from the 'single story' to embrace diverse perspectives and ideas
- Education for social justice
 - co-creating authentic and meaningful learning and teaching
 - working to solve 'wicked' problems that benefit the wider community





References and further reading

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Thank you!

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